

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 245109

TOSEC 820

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: PFOR, CY, GR, TU

SUBJECT:NICOSIA AIRPORT

AMMAN FOR HARTMAN

BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS GIVEN DEPARTMENT TEXT OF
TELEGRAM, WHICH UK HIGH COMMISSIONER IN NICOSIA SENT TO
LONDON ON NOVEMBER 6.

BEGIN TEXT: 1. I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS MATTER WITH MY US
COLLEAGUE AS SUGGESTED IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF THE TELEGRAM
UNDER REFERENCE. THE COUNSELLORS OF OUR TWO MISSIONS
HAVE ALSO HAD A DISCUSSION WITH GORGE, THE SENIOR POLITICAL
ADVISER AT UNFICYP. I HAD CLEARED THE GROUND FOR THIS
LATTER MEETING WITH WECKMANN WITHOUT DISCLOSING TO HIM
OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE RUSSIAN OFFER.

2. AS SEEN FROM HERE, THE KEY TO THE REOPENING OF NICOSIA
AIRPORT, WHETHER FOR LIMITED HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES OR FOR
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GENERAL COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS LIES IN ANKARA. THE CYPRUS

GOVERNMENT AND, ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WILLING TO SEE THE AIRPORT OPENED UNDER UN CONTROL. AS I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED THIS PROPOSITION WAS PUT FORWARD LAST MONTH DURING THE CLERIDES/DENKTASH TALKS. DENKTASH SUBSEQUENTLY INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO PURSUE THE ISSUE. BOTH CLERIDES AND THE GREEK GOVERNMENT ARE LIKELY TO MAINTAIN THEIR OBJECTION TO ANY DIRECT TURKISH MAINLAND INVOLVEMENT IN

THE MANAGEMENT OR OPERATION OF THE AIRFIELD WHICH THEY REGARD AS A PURELY CYPRIOT INSTITUTION. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY WOULD WISH TO EXCLUDE THE PARTICIPATION OF TURKISH CYPRIOTS: THIS THEY WOULD ACCEPT. THE FIRST ESSENTIAL THEREFORE IS TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE FROM THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT THAT THE AIRPORT MAY BE RE-PAIRED AND REOPENED UNDER UN CONTROL. ONCE THIS HAS BEEN OBTAINED IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER DETAILS.

3. GORGE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE UNITED NATIONS (PROBABLY THROUGH THE AGENCY OF ICAO) COULD EFFECTIVELY MANAGE AND OPERATE THE AIRPORT. THEY MAY WISH TO CALL ON OUR SUPPORT FOR THE REPAIR OF THE RUNWAY AND ALSO FOR SOME OF THE TECHNICAL SERVICES SUCH AS AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL. WE SAID, WITHOUT FINAL COMMITMENT, THAT WE WOULD NO DOUBT BE WILLING TO PROVIDE ANY SUPPORT THAT WE REASONABLY COULD.

4. MANY PRACTICAL PROBLEMS WOULD HAVE TO BE SOLVED, SUCH AS WHO SHOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR CUSTOMS AND FOR IMMIGRATION CONTROL: HOW WOULD RESERVATIONS AND TICKETING BE ORGANISED: WHAT CATERING SERVICES WOULD BE AVAILABLE. GORGE WAS ONCE AGAIN CONFIDENT THAT, GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD FROM ATHENS AND ANKARA, CLERIDES AND DENKTASH COULD DEVISE SATISFACTORY WORKING ARRANGEMENTS.

5. THERE COULD BE DIFFICULTIES OVER THE COSTS OF OPERATING THE AIRPORT. THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT IS IN SEVERE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT EITHER TURKEY OR THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS WOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY. SOME OF THE COSTS COULD PRESUMABLY BE OFFSET BY LANDING FEES.
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THESE WOULD HOWEVER BE UNLIKELY TO COVER ALL EXPENDITURE. THE UN COULD THUS BE LANDED WITH A CONSIDERABLE BILL.

6. GORGE SUGGESTED THAT IF THE PROPOSAL FOR REOPENING UNDER UN CONTROL WAS TO BE SERIOUSLY PURSUED IT MIGHT HELP IF AT AN EARLY STAGE A PROMINENT UN PERSONALITY, EG MR. HAMMARSKJOLD OF IATA, BE SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED TO SPEND SOME TIME IN CYPRUS TO GET THINGS MOVING.

7. THE GENERAL CONCLUSION REACHED IS THUS THAT THE REPAIR, REOPENING AND OPERATION OF THE AIRPORT UNDER UN CONTROL, BUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GREEK AND TURKISH CYPRIOTS IS FEASIBLE. THE FIRST ESSENTIAL WOULD BE TO OBTAIN BROAD AGREEMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENTS IN ATHENS AND ANKARA BOTH OF WHOM WOULD HAVE TO GIVE WIDE POWERS OF DISCRETION TO MR. CLERIDES AND MR. DENKTASH. END TEXT. INGERSOLL

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